DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 217 757 HE 015 109

AUTHOR Boyes, Rod L.
TITLE Corporations and Interinstitutional Cooperation in Higher Education.
PUB DATE Mar 81
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Council on Interinstitutional Leadership (Racine, WI, March 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Students; Articulation (Education); Community Colleges; Consortia; Educational Media; Employees; Engineering Education; Higher Education; *Industrial Training; Industry; *Institutional Cooperation; Nontraditional Education; Nontraditional Students; *Professional Continuing Education; Professional Education; *School Business Relationship; Staff Development; Technical Education; Technology
IDENTIFIERS *Corporate Education; *General Motors Institute

ABSTRACT

The potential of higher education to affect business and the needs of employees is considered by a representative of General Motors Corporation. It is suggested that community colleges are one of the most responsive groups to the needs of business and its employees, although the quality and content of programs vary and financial problems hinder cooperative ventures. A problem area is the transfer of credits from 2-year to 4-year colleges. Interinstitutional cooperation is difficult in that courses may not be transferred and residency requirements and tuition rates vary. Arrangements between business and colleges are specific to the institution, and an employee who is transferred before completing the educational program may be in trouble. Schools also have emphasized traditionally-aged rather than adult students, and nontraditional programs continue to struggle to achieve the image and perceived quality of regular university programs. A prime example of interinstitutional cooperation in the technical education area is the Association for Media Based Continuing Engineering Education, a group including 22 universities which produces videotapes in technical areas. Many companies have formed the Technical Education Consortium, including General Motors, Xerox, and IBM, and each has unique concerns and strengths in the area of technical education. General Motors Institute has traditionally been an undergraduate engineering institution but is moving into the continuing technical education arena on a media basis. These companies feel they must offer education to achieve content needs and consistency. Most companies do not have to deal with academic concerns. Since materials can be used virtually worldwide, companies are providing their own form of interinstitutional cooperation. The ability to update programs and offer them on nontraditional schedules is important. The PLATO System of Control Data Corporation is an example of commercially available educational services. An automotive technician program offered through the cooperation of General Motors and a Michigan community college is briefly described. (SW)

HE 015 109

RLB--3/2/81
Rod L. Boyes

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Council on Interinstitutional Leadership
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED217757

CORPORATIONS AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

SPEECH FOR COUNCIL ON INTERINSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

March 1981

I appreciate very much the opportunity to meet with this particular group. It is my feeling that the business world should be very interested in and supportive of your efforts to cooperate and achieve greater efficiencies. Among other things, this impacts the taxes corporations pay or the contributions they make with respect to your activities. It can ultimately impact the quality of the incoming human resource stream that businesses utilize for new personnel. It can impact the quality and range of continuing education programs which facilitate the ongoing development of personnel, whether it relates to specific skill development or general development.

However, I believe that the business world has concerns about the products of educational programs as well as the efficiency with which you build them. Specifically, business is experiencing a severe short fall in technical education areas and to some extent in business education areas. It is far easier in most of our communities, even in so-called industrialized metropolitan areas, to locate a course in lapidary, small engine repair, modern health care, or bridge than it is to find a course in geometric tolerancing, metrics, computing, finance, or productivity.

It is extremely difficult to make judgments regarding what is in the public interest in adult education. For example, I note in the February 1981 issue of the Acquainter that the National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded the University of Mid-America $486,148 to support a one-year library community outreach program for adults on the history of the plains. I don't deny the importance of this, that is, the importance of broadening citizens in

HE 015 109

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

a particular regional area with respect the culture and background of that region. But I am concerned about the total balance of education insofar as it has the potential to affect our business processes, standards of living and the overall quality of life. I don't want to overstate the needs of business and individuals who work in business, but I do suggest that these needs are worthy of increased attention.

The needs are not based solely at the self-interests of businesses. Corporations are struggling with equal opportunity issues, e.g., the need to develop women and minorities for positions of increasing responsibilities in business organizations. Many of these individuals have not had the opportunity to acquire basic business and technical courses during their formative years. Accordingly, the role of continuing education--which can significantly enhance the capabilities of these people--is a critical factor.

I don't want to leave the impression that business needs are totally ignored. Some institutions or organizations have responded very well. I would like to present a few examples which are not interinstitutional in nature--and several which are.

One of the most responsive groups in terms of support to businesses and people who work in businesses has been the community or junior colleges. We find that these colleges are willing to do almost anything if they can get an increase in the number of students in a program which qualifies for state money on a headcount basis. One of our training coordinators in a Southern plant has indicated that a local school will teach on premises free of charge if 12 or more people are enrolled. In some cases schools within a region will compete for the opportunity. Incentives for cooperation among these schools can be submerged by the competitive environment.

Community and junior colleges have been very instrumental in providing education support for our apprentice programs. Unfortunately, we have little idea what we are getting from apprentice programs and school "X" is different from "Y" which is different from "Z," etc. The quality is varied, the content is varied and somehow interinstitutional cooperation in terms of curriculum content has not been achieved. This may be the fault of the business world; the business world is reluctant to become deeply involved in curricula--and assumes that educators know best.

GM has cooperated with a Michigan community college regarding the development of a unique automotive technician program. The faculty worked closely with our personnel in designing a work/study program quite different from conventional programs. The resulting program is a two-year automotive technician curriculum wherein the academic portion varies in length from 10 to 16 weeks depending on the objectives of that particular educational module. Also, the program includes work experience modules which are based on specific learning objectives. The Corporation did provide financial support to enable the college to cover additional costs and ancillary support was provided in terms of equipment. The program appears to be very successful and we hope it will be expanded nationwide. This will require a great degree of interinstitutional cooperation in academic and administrative areas. Perhaps such an effort will give us needed experience in solving problems on an interinstitutional basis.

We find community colleges attempting to work together, but they may be somewhat restricted by their own financial patterns. They are very interested in increasing student headcount and the competition for state aid is substantial. They are very dependent on outside instructors rather than internal permanent instructors for cost reasons. The reality of this economic structure can lead to a compromise of quality. I certainly hope that our efforts to work with these schools do not compromise quality.

A classic problem in academic interinstitutional cooperation concerns the relationship between the community or junior colleges and four-year colleges. Several years ago, a large Dallas corporation noted that it had been paying substantial amounts in tuition assistance to employes who attended junior colleges in the area. When these individuals attempted to transfer to "regular" colleges, most credits were not accepted. The individual wasted time and money--and so did the corporation. This situation has been resolved as a result of discussions between the business community and the schools--course descriptions, etc., have been standardized--and the situation is vastly improved. We have a long way to go in many other areas of the country.

As we look at the university level, interinstitutional cooperation in academic areas becomes increasingly difficult. Courses may not be transferred, residency requirements vary, tuition rates are different, etc. Corporations which have facilities in different regions must adapt to the personality of the local institution. IBM, for example has worked closely with local schools to develop graduate programs for employes. Heaven help the employe who is transferred before his program is complete. The problem with these arrangements is that they are highly specific to the institution. Please bear in mind that I'm concerned primarily with fields of study of interest to business.

A related factor which hinders development of educational support to businesses is that education beyond the traditional on-campus young people's programs continues to have an image problem, particularly at the University level. Many agree with Clark Kerr's observation that the educational system in this country has been built on young people and little emphasis has been placed on adults. Although we have had some significant programs in the adult area, nontraditional programs continue to struggle to achieve the image and perceived quality of regular university programs.

But there are bright spots--and these relate to your concept of cooperation. The prime example of interinstitutional cooperation in the tech ed area is the Association for Media Based Continuing Engineering Education. This association includes 22 universities which produce videotapes in technical areas. Most utilize videotapes to provide credit for master's curricula in engineering as well as for noncredit short courses. Currently, we are working with two AMCEE members--University of Michigan and Purdue--to facilitate the development of GM technical personnel; GMI is not a member but has produced materials in the area of microcomputing which AMCEE can use elsewhere.

In view of a shared concern about education, a number of companies have formed a group called the Technical Education Consortium, or TEC Club. This group had its first meeting in February 1981 at GMI and includes corporations such as Texas Instruments, Xerox, IBM, Bell System Center for Technical Education, Westinghouse, Mobil, Xerox, and others. We find that each organization has unique concerns and strengths in the area of technical eduation. TI is very strong in the video instructional development area and aid for employe education. The Bell System Center for Technical Education has a complete educational institution which facilitates basic tech ed programs in media and standup training as well as packaged dissemination to the various Bell System companies. GMI has traditionally been an undergraduate engineering institution which is now accredited by ABET, but is moving more and more into the continuing technical education arena on a media basis.

These companies feel a great need to enter the educational business because they cannot resolve their need for content and consistency in other ways. With the exception of GMI's undergraduate program, these companies do not have to deal with "academic" concerns. This does not necessarily mean that quality is compromised; I have seen a great deal more in the area of instructional design

and the measurement of the effectiveness of course units in business than I have seen in universities. Educational flexibility, meaning the ability to update programs and offer them on nontraditional schedules is important. Also, consistency is possible in that materials can be used virtually worldwide. In this sense, companies are providing their own form of interinstitutional cooperation.

In some cases businesses are finding it cost effective to get into the educational business and sell their wares to other organizations. Control Data with its PLATO System is one example of commercially available educational services.

Some people feel that the education industry is dying--if so, why are businesses getting into the educational industry? They certainly don't get into it to make great sums of money. And they prefer to "buy" from educational institutions where possible.

Since there are needs--growing needs---there are coportunities--which are economically sound and socially beneficial. Perhaps interinstitutional cooperation must be promoted to business and industry. Certainly business and industry should reflect sensitivity in terms of interinstitutional organizations to a greater extent. This would obviate the need to work with so many differing institutions.

I'm not quite sure how to proceed--and I would be very interested in your recommendations.

and the measurement of the effectiveness of course units in business than I have seen in universities. Educational flexibility, meaning the ability to update programs and offer them on nontraditional schedules is important. Also, consistency is possible in that materials can be used virtually worldwide. In this sense, companies are providing their own form of interinstitutional cooperation.

In some cases businesses are finding it cost effective to get into the educational business and sell their wares to other organizations. Control Data with its PLATO System is one example of commercially available educational services.

Some people feel that the education industry is dying--if so, why are businesses getting into the educational industry? They certainly don't get into it to make great sums of money. And they prefer to "buy" from educational institutions where possible.

Since there are needs--growing needs---there are opportunities--which are economically sound and socially beneficial. Perhaps interinstitutional cooperation must be promoted to business and industry. Certainly business and industry should reflect sensitivity in terms of interinstitutional organizations to a greater extent. This would obviate the need to work with so many differing institutions.

I'm not quite sure how to proceed--and I would be very interested in your recommendations.